HARAMBEE FLAME

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In This Issue:

"Exercising Political Impotency"(Editorial); From Other Sources: Black Studies Conference, Revlon Boycott, Community Directions, African "Suicides," Israeli Arms To South Africa, Unita Public Relations, Zaire-U.S. Connection, African Oil Cartel; '87 H.A.C.O. Banquet; Back In Time: Bizarre Racist Theories; Announcements

Exercising Political Impotency

In the January edition of the FLAME, we discussed the attempt on the part of African people in Omaha to, through petition, secure a grand jury investigation into the killing of Richard Kellin(while in the custody of members of the Omaha Police Department). We predicted that such a grand jury, inasmuch as it would most probably be comprised of all, or mostly all, Caucasians, would find the police innocent of wrong-doing. Since that time, a grand jury was called. It "investigated" and issued no indictments. One of the spokespersons for the petition effort was Fred Conley, the only African member of the Omaha City Council. His response to the grand jury finding? Essentially, it was that all he had wanted was an ivestigation by an independent, neutral body; that such a body had performed its investigation; and that he was satisfied with the results. The question of how it is possible for a mature African man or woman in racist America to view an all-Caucasian or majority-Caucasian grand jury to be independent or neutral with regard to the life of an African notwithstanding, the fact is that no information has been released which answers the troubling questions about the Kellin killing that were the motivating force behind the petition effort in the first place.

In the meantime, primary elections have been held in Omaha for the filling of city council seats in districts #2(the district represented by Conley) and #6. Fred Conley came out first of four candidates running for the second-district city council seat. On May 12th. he run in the general election against the district #2 runner-up, Monroe Coleman, an elderly ex-policeman. Both men, while African with respect to heritage, are characterized by a practically total lack of African consciousness, Moreover, neither of the candidates has anything in the way of a specific progressive agenda to offer his African constituency. Such is the blandness of both men that there is a campaign going on in Omaha's African community to get folks to vote "none of the above."

But though the above-described events and situation reflect matters specific to Omaha, Nebraska; they represent a common scenario for African people throughout

the U.S., particularly in cities where we are clear minorities in their respective populations. Mayor Harold Washington can be expected to get some relevant changes made for Chicago's African community. Such an expectation is based primarily on two factors: that the forces supporting or sympathetic to the Washington political/social/economic agenda comprise a majority(though a very slim one) on the Chicago city council, and that Washington has shown both a commitment to bringing about change and the courage and boldness to fight those forces that would stand in the way of such change. How much he and his allies and supporters are able to do is restricted, of course, by the bounderies against change established and maintained by the corporations which control the finances of Chicago.

In a city such as Omaha where Africans are a clear minority(The African population in Omaha is 10-12% of the total population.), their expectations of a person representing them on the city council are necessarily low with respect to the question of tangible gains. However, the fact that Omaha's African community has but one representative in a seven-person city council should not preclude them from expecting that their representative will provide a strong and progressive, if not radical, "voice" for their concerns. But the fact is that Fred Conley(the incumbent in the upcoming election) has not provided such a voice. Quite to the contrary, he, like the toolarge a number of other African politicians in the U.S., recognizes himself as being part of "the system" and is limited in his attitudes and actions to that which he views as acceptable within "the-system" context. Thus, he does not want to do or say anything that will put him in the position of appearing different from or offensive to "his" Caucasian "colleagues."

But the situation for African people in Omaha specifically and in America in general is such that we cannot afford to be "represented" by those whose willingness to speak on our behalf is restricted to occasional whimpers and whose whimpers are only voiced when demanded by the screams of African constituencies protesting specific and blatant incidents/situations where they/we believe we've been wronged. We cannot afford to be so "represented" but have come to accept the exercise of gutlessness on our behalf because we've gotten used to it, got-

(Continued on page 15)

"...we must control the politics and politicians of our community. They must no longer take orders from outside forces. We will organize, and sweep out of office all Negro politicians who are puppets for the outside forces ...The black man in the black community has to be re-educated into the science of politics so he will know what politics is supposed to bring him in return."

MALCOLM

May 19, 1925 —— Feb. 21, 1965

From Other Sources

National Council For Black Studies Meets

"The theme of the four-day gathering(of the 11th annual NCBS conference) was 'Developing Black Minds In Afrocentric Thought.' However, underlying the meeting was deep concern over attempts to destabilize or eliminate Black Studies departments at universities across the country...

"'At no time in its history has the organization adopted positions as strong as those ratified this year,' said one participant, alluding to measures aimed at withdrawing support from Black Studies faculty and staff judged indifferent to, if not downright disdainful of the concept of Black Studies. (Emphasis added)

"'Previously,' said NCBS chair (Delores)Aldridge, 'we supported Blacks under fire from school administrations, even when they had not worked in the interest of Afro-American scholarship. But those days are over,' she said. 'We need faculty and staff who truly understand the Afrocentric point of view, and who are able to provide strong role models for our students.'

"Other measures ratified by the membership included proposals calling for the standardization of curriculum and guidelines for evaluating faculty and staff; recognition of the fluidity and complex beauty of regional, or Black English; and the adoption of a single name for the discipline..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Black Chairs Meet In Columbus(Ohio)," which appears on page 2A of the April 23rd edition of the COLUMBUS CALL AND POST.

Battle For Markets In Hair Products Industry

"A Black boycott of Revlon cosmetic products is underway, in response to Revlon's aggressive efforts to take over the $1 billion Black hair care products market and in protest of Revlon's subsidiary in South Africa...

"White-owned companies have cut into the market by 50% so far, using their huge budgets to out-market and undersell Black competitors...

"The Revlon boycott has gained momentum and shows no sign of letting up. Rev. Jesse Jackson and PUSH dramatized the boycott last October through a mock funeral with a casket filled with Revlon products...

"Since then, Revlon funerals have been held in 37 cities, and Black consumer groups, churches and cosmetologists have joined the boycott..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Black Consumer Boycott Hits Revlon," which appears on page 4 of the April 20 edition of UNITY.

African Community Directions In U.S.

"The ominous implications of the decline in living conditions for a large and growing segment of black America is forcing a reconciliation of black leaders who formerly advocated conflicting strategies. The major conflict always has been between advocates of self-help and those who urge protest...

"The Joint Center for Political Studies(JCPS), a black-oriented think tank based in Washington, D.C., recently published an essay that makes a compelling case for combining the two strategies. Entitled 'Black Initiatives And Govermental Responsibility,' the essay was written under the auspices of the center's Committee on Policy for Racial Justice...

"According to JCPS President Eddie Williams, the essay is the collaborative effort of '30 distinguished black scholars from around the nation' and is intended to

'clarify public discussion and confusion about black community directions.' ...

"The essay offers a three-part framework for 'the new agenda which black organizations are debating':

the need for blacks to draw more explicitly from a long tradition of 'black values that continue to sustain them';

the need for blacks to 'mobilize or, in some instances, redirect the strong self-help tradition that is hard at work but too often hidden from public view'; and

the need to make a logical case that outlines 'the government's responsibility for disadvantaged citizens in a stable democracy and to indicate specific steps that the government should take.'..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Black Movement's Clashing Factions Discovering A New Middle Ground, which appears on page 6 of the April 22-28 edition of IN THESE TIMES.

The Believe-It-Or-Not "Suicides"

"It was on March 12 that a body of a Black man was found hanging from a tree in New York City's Central Park... The man's hands and feet were bound with rope. But for almost two weeks after the discovery of the body, the major ruling-class media deliberately suppressed this story while the police insisted that this was a suicide, not a murder,..Only the Black owned newspapers paid any attention to the incident..."

"The March 23 DAILY NEWS article reported on the claim by the police that 'fiber evidence' backed up the 'suicide' theory. According to the police, a pair of 'linty' gloves were found on the man's body. A police official told DAILY NEWS that the gloves 'left lint on everything they touched. We found lint on the rope where it went around the branch, around his ankles, and around his wrists.' The official added, 'Taking it all together, it would have been possible for him to climb the tree--

sit on a limb, tie his ankles, tie the rope around his neck, then tie up his wrists and jump..."

"Two days after the story of the hanging finally began to appear, the press also reported that the police had established the identity of the dead man. He was Abbi Sayed, a 33-year-old immigrant student from Ethiopia. Sayed was a senior at the State University of New York campus at Stony Brook, Long Island, where he was involved in anti-apartheid activities..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Suspicious Tracks," which appears on page 12 of the April 6 edition of REVOLUTIONARY WORKER.

"...Sayed was the third Black man found hanged in New York in the last ten months. Last May, the body of Franklin Rudge was found hanging from a conveyor belt in a Bronx lumberyard. On February 7, the body of Robert Carolina Jr. was found hanging from a cable along the footpath of the Brooklyn Bridge. The police have called both cases suicides..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Black Man Found Hanging In Central Park," which appears on page 4 of the April 8 edition of THE GUARDIAN.

"Shortly after midnight on the morning of March 31, Joe Carter, a Black high school senior from Flint, Michigan, was doused with gasoline and set on fire. With horrible burns covering his entire body, screaming for help, he ran to several houses in the mostly white neighborhood where he found himself. But no doors were opened to him until he came upon a bar many blocks away. By sunrise he lay dead in a nearby hospital. Police immediately labeled this horror a suicide, even though before his death Joe Carter had told bar patrons, ambulance workers, and the police themselves that he had been set on fire by someone else...

"...not only is burning a very rare form of suicide but... No suicide note was found, nor was anything wrong when he spoke earlier that night with his mother and girlfriend.

He had shown no signs of depression...Joe Carter was not burned near his home in Flint itself, but about two miles away in Burton, a predominantly white suburb with a long history of racism, including KKK activity...Immediately, talk circulated among them(Carter's classmates) that Joe may have been kidnapped and torched by a group of white youths, possibly in retaliation for going out with a young white woman..."

-Above passages excerpted from "The Burning Of Joe Carter," which appears on page 6 of the April 20 edition of REVOLUTIONARY WORKER.

Israeli Pledge On Arms Deals With South Africa

"...It(Israeli cabinet) is hoping its March 19 announcement that it will not sign new military contracts with South Africa will be perceived as a halt in arms sales to the white minority government...

"Israel's military commerce with South Africa, however, will not be cut back for years, if ever. Since all military contracts between Israel and South Africa are secret, it will be impossible to monitor Israel's compliance with the cabinet decision...

"...much of Israel's military commerce with Pretoria is derived from fees for licensing the production of weapons systems or components. In the past the Israelis have indicated that most of their contracts with South Africa expire in the next three or four years; now it is reported that some run into the early 1990s...It has also not been made clear whether Israeli advisers helping South Africa with counterinsurgency strategy and with the absorption of military technology are also covered by a contract...Israel also has not pledged to stop helping South Africa undermine U.S. sanctions by such ruses as reexporting South African goods into the U.S. under 'made in Israel' label..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Tel Aviv Feigns End Of Arms Sales To Pretoria," which appears on page 13 of the April 15 edition of THE GUARDIAN.

Africans In U.S. Form Group To Gain Support For South Africa-Backed Unita

"The South African-backed insurgency in Angola known as Unita is stepping up its public relations here with a new set of tactics...In the same speech(given before the Senate recently), (Senate Minority leader)Dole lauded the formation of a new organization in this country known as Black Americans for a Free Angola. The group is headed up by the Rev. Clarence Dawkins, who is registered with the Justice Deparment as a foreign agent for Unita...Dawkins' organization...has been established to persuade Blacks in this country that Unita is fighting a valiant struggle against 'Moscow-supported racism' in Southern Africa..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Unita Softens Its Rhetoric To Hold U.S. Support," which appears on pages 7 and 8 of the April 22 edition of THE GUARDIAN.

Zaire-U.S. Connection

"...Located centrally on the (African)continent, it (Zaire) is strategically important to United States foreign policy in southern and central Africa. Zaire holds 70% of the world's cobalt, is the second largest producer of diamonds, and is rich in copper, gold, uranium, manganese, oil and tin. More than half of the U.S. defense and industrial requirement of cobalt comes from Zaire...Despite the extreme poverty that the people live under, President Mobutu is one of the richest men in the world. His personal wealth is estimated at about $5 billion--equal to the country's total national debt.

"...The Mobutu regime is under investigation by the House Subcommittee on Africa for continued human rights abuses. The House Subcommittee on Military Installations and Construction, chaired by Rep. Ron Dellums(D-CA), is considering holding hearings on potential violations by the Pentagon on use of funds to upgrade the Kamina air base in southern Zaire, thought to be used as a staging ground for illegal shipments of weapons and funds to the South African-backed UNITA forces at-

tempting to overthrow the Angolan government..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Clothing Drive Bolsters Congolese Freedom Fight," which appears on pages 7 and 19 of the April 10 edition of THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE.

African Oil-Producers Link Up

"The specter of African oil unity has reared its head again following the January meeting of the Association of African Oil-Producing Countries(APPA). The new group comprises the African OPEC countries as well as other African oil-producing nations.

"...APPA's main tasks would be to encourage African countries to cooperate in the exploration and development of reserves and to promote exchanges of views on energy policies...

"International oil companies are following the birth of APPA closely. African oil, particularly from the West Coast, competes with American and North Sea crude in the principal markets of the U.S. and Europe.

-Above passages excerpted from "African Oil Group," which appears on page 48 of the May edition of WORLD PRESS REVIEW.

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FLAME Editorial Policy

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.), is a pan-Africanist newsletter. This means that the FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events, and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any artificial distinction between African people based solely on place of birth. Therefore, references to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this policy is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter the terms used therein to fit our editorial policy.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as being those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor.

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 900 words. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. Send your submissions to: HARAMBEE FLAME
Attn: Editor
Harambee Afrikan Cultural Org.
P.O. Box 2500
Lincoln, NE
68502-0500

Announcements

Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization meetings through July:

Tue. May 5	Tue. June 2	Sun. July 5
Sun. May 10	Sun. June 7	Tue. July 14
Tue. May 19	Tue. June 16	Sun. July 19
Sun. May 24	Sun. June 21	Tue. July 28
	Tue. June 30	

We encourage the participation of our Brothers and Sisters from the outside in our programs. For information, write to the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NB; 68502-0500. If you're interested in presenting an educational program, write "Attn: Education Chairman" c/o the above. Our meetings run from 6-8 p.m.

The following are some of the upcoming events and activities being sponsored by the Malone Community Center in Lincoln: Volunteer Recognition Dinner, honoring the work of Malone Community Center volunteers. Christina Godfrey, Director of the Center, will be addressing the gathering. The dinner will be held at the Malone Community Center(2032 U St.) on May 13 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For more information contact Joyce Bradley at 474-1110, ext. 7.

Juneteenth Celebration to be held on June 20 and will begin with a church service at 11:00 a.m. at Allen's Chapel. Following the church service there will be a festival running from noon to 6:00 p.m. The concluding event will be a street dance later that evening.

For information about the Malone Community Center's Summer Day Care Program, contact Barbara Kelley at the Malone Center, ext. 7.

You are welcome to submit announcements for appearance in the FLAME. Also, we are now accepting submissions of ads, so long as the products or services to be advertised are not demeaning to African people.

H.A.C.O. Banquet 1987

On Saturday, April 18, we held our 11th. annual banquet. The event, which was to have begun at 5:00 but didn't actually begin until nearly 6, was held in the pen's south gym and was attended by approximately seventy-five folks, including our membership and guests from the African communities in Omaha and Lincoln. The main features of the banquet were: the awards ceremony; address on the banquet theme, "that cultural awareness is key to liberation"; and a performance of traditional African dance.

In addition to the presentation of awards to the members of the organization's various committees, awards were also given, for special service to the organization, to: H.A.C.O. members Lawrence Atwater and Hanee(Robert Toney) and to Sheba(Judith Jordan).

Professor Brennan Taylor of the Sociology Dept. at U.N.O. delivered the address on cultural awareness and focused primarily on education, posing the question of whether the American school system's "educational" process is a tool of liberation or a tool of enslavement. He spoke of the importance of our(as students and as parents of students) being vigilant to protect ourselves from the destructive effects of an "educational" process designed to lead us away from ourselves, from knowledge of who we are.

Probably the most exciting and spirit-touching facet of the evening's program was the dance performance by the family troupe of Sandra McSwain and her children--Mia, Monica, and Ervin III. Sandra performed with her eight-year-old son first and then performed with her daughters, ages fifteen and seventeen. Dressed alike, in traditional African garments, Sandra and her daughters presented a kind of optical illusion in which it seemed one were watching three images of the same person. The unity of their dance was both real and symbolic, pointing to the three women's unity of size, complexion, and movement and, symbolically, to the unity that should be characteristic of all our families and to our largest family--Africa itself. Moreover, the performance by Mother and Son exhibited both family love and the rewards of a nurturing guidance.

(Continued on the following page)

In addition to the above-mentioned activities, live music was performed by "Destiny," a group from Omaha comprised of all(but one) Sisters. The meal was magnificently prepared by a team of H.A.C.O. members and consisted of barbecued beef ribs, turnip and mustard greens, black-eyed peas, yams, and wheat rolls. Chocolate cake and vanilla ice cream were served for dessert.

Back In Time

"...a well-known physician of the ante-bellum South, Dr. Samuel Cartwright of Louisiana, had a psychiatric explanation for runaway slaves. He diagnosed their malady as 'drapetomania,' literally the flight-from-home madness, 'as much a disease of the mind as any other species of mental alienation.' Another ailment peculiar to black people was 'dysaesthesia Aethiopica,' sometimes called rascality by overseers, but actually due to 'insensibility of nerves' and 'hebetude of mind,' explained Dr. Cartwright. Whereas psychologically normal Negroes were faithful and happy-go-lucky, the mentally afflicted ones 'pay no attention to the rights of property... slight their work...raise disturbances with their overseers.'" (Stampp, 1956)

"...In 1906, Dr. Robert Bennett Bean, a professor of anatomy at Johns Hopkins, published a learned article on 'Some racial peculiarities of the Negro brain' in the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF ANATOMY...Dr. Bean enunciated a persuasive syllogism. The Negro's brain was smaller, he claimed, had fewer nerve cells and fibers; the brain's 'efficiency' depends on the number and position of such fibers; hence 'the possibilities of developing the Negro are limited'(Bean, 1906)..."

-From RACISM AND PSYCHIATRY by Alexander Thomas and Samuel Sillen(Brunner/Mazel, Publishers; N.Y.)

ten used to mediocrity, arrived at a point where we will take whatever we can get. Fortunately, not all of us are quite so willing to accept just anything/anyone. The "none-of-the-above" campaign being talked about in Omaha's African community is an example of this.

But most assuredly, those who are urging folks to vote for "none-of-the-above" are being spiritedly reminded by others about the importance of exercising the right to vote, about the fact that our foreparents suffered for our right to vote, etc., etc. But while we do have a right to vote and our foreparents did suffer to secure that right for us, more important than our right to vote is our obligation to use that right to our best interest and advantage. In no case can it be considered that it is in our best interest and advantage to be "represented" by persons who do not have the courage and/or ability to speak for us and, when/where possible, deliver "the goods"(concrete programs).

Our situation demands that we acquire political sophistication, that we learn that the right to vote can be exercised in more than one way, and that we develop the ability to correctly judge when specific methods of exercising the right to vote are called for by given circumstances. And the given circumstances for Omaha's African population are that they face, as do African people throughout this country, severe problems and that the two candidates who are on the ballot for the May 12 election for the second district council seat are very poor substitutes for the kind of aggressive advocates for change that the situation affecting the African community calls for.

As a people thus-far unprepared and/or unwilling to recognize the reality of our status as subjects of a domestic colonialism and unprepared and unwilling to take measures to change this status, the very least we can do is elect people to office who do recognize our status and are capable of and willing to fight on our behalf. If our making use of "none-of-the-above" campaigns, write-in candidacies, or/and election boycotts are required to get this point across to pathetic political hacks, then so be it.

Editor/Wopashitwe Mondo Byen we Langa(aka David Rice)